

THE
SEAMAN'S MONITOR,

Extracted from the Works of

The late Rev. JOHN FLAVEL.

Pſalm cvii. 23—32.

“ They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in the great waters; theſe ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy wind which liſteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble. They reel to and fro, they ſtagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their diſtreſſes! He maketh the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the waves thereof are ſtill. Then are they glad becauſe they be quiet; ſo he bringeth them unto their deſired haven. Oh that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”

London:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR

1799.

HYMN.

" Looking upward in a Storm." Psalm xlii.

THE billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to thee I call,
My fears are great, my strength is small.

O Lord the pilot's part perform,
And guide and guard me through the storm
Defend me from each threat'ning ill,
Controul the waves, say " Peace, be still!

Amidst the roaring of the sea,
My soul still hangs her hope on thee!
Thy constant love, thy faithful care,
Is all that saves me from despair.

Dangers of ev'ry shape and name
Attend the followers of the Lamb,
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
And leave it to return no more.

Though tempest tofs'd, and half a wreck,
My Saviour through the floods I seek;
Let neither winds nor stormy main
Force back my shatter'd bark again.

TO ALL

Masters, Mariners, & Seamen.

MY FRIENDS,

I Find it said of *Anacharis*, that when one asked him, whether the living or the dead were more? He returned this answer, "*You must first tell me in which number I must place seamen:*" intimating thereby, that seamen are, as it were, a third sort of persons, to be numbered neither with the living nor the dead; their lives hanging continually in suspense before them.* And it was anciently accounted the most desperate employment, and they little better than lost men that used the seas. And although custom, and the great improvement of the art of navigation, have made it less formidable now, yet are you no further from death than you are from the waters, which is but a remove of two or three inches. Now you that border so nigh upon the confines of death and eternity every moment, may well be supposed to be men of singular piety and seriousness: for nothing more composes the

A 2

* Well may a seaman cry out: I have not had a morrow in my hands these many years.

heart to such a frame, than the lively apprehensions of eternity do; and none have greater external advantages for that, than you have. But alas! for the generality, what sort of men are more ungodly, and stupidly insensible of eternal concerns? Living for the most part, as if they had made a covenant with death, and with hell were at agreement. It was an ancient saying, "he that knows not how to pray, let him go to sea." But we may say now, (alas, that we may say so in times of greater light) he that would learn to be prophane, to drink and swear, and dishonour God, let him go to sea. As for prayer, it is a rare thing among seamen, they count that a needless business: they see the prophane and vile delivered as well as others; and therefore, what profit is there if they pray unto him? Mal iii. 14. As I remember, I have read of a prophane soldier, who was heard swearing, though he stood in a place of great danger; and when one that stood by him warned him, saying, *fellow-soldier, do not swear, the bullets fly*; he answered, *they that swear come off as well as they that pray*. Soon after a shot hit him, and down he fell. Plato diligently admonished all men to avoid the sea: for (saith he) it is the *school-master of all vice and dishonesty*. Sirs! it is a very sad consideration to me, that you who float upon the great deeps, in whose bottom so many thousand poor miserable

creatures lie, whose sins have sunk them down, not only into the bottom of the sea, but of hell also. whither divine vengeance hath pursued them: that you (I say) who daily float, and hover over them, and have the roaring waves and billows that swallowed them up, gaping for you as the next prey, should be no more affected with these things. Oh what a terrible voice doth God utter in the storm! *It breaks the cedars, shakes the wilderness, makes the hinds to calve*, Psa. xxix. 5. And can it not shake your hearts? This voice of the Lord is full of majesty, but his voice in the word is more efficacious and powerful, Heb. iv. 12. to convince and rise up the heart. This word is exalted above all his name, Psa. cxxxviii. 2. and if it cannot awaken you, it is no wonder you remain secure and dead, when the Lord utters his voice in the most dreadful storms and tempests. But if neither the voice of God uttered in his dreadful works, or in his glorious gospel, can effectually awaken and rouse you, there is an *Euroclydon*,* a fearful storm coming, which will so awaken your souls, as that they shall never sleep any more, Psa. xi. 6. *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this is the portion of their cup.* You that have been at sea in the most violent storms, never felt such a

A 3

See A Ga xxvii.

storm as this, and the Lord grant you never may; no calm shall follow this storm. There are some among you, that, I am persuaded, do truly fear that God in whose hand their life and breath is; men that fear an oath, and are an honour to their profession; who drive a trade for heaven, and are diligent to secure the happiness of their immortal souls, in the insurance office above; but for the generality, alas! they mind none of these things. How many of you are coasting to and fro, from one country to another? but never think of that heavenly country above, nor how you may get the merchandize thereof, which is better than the gold of *Ophir*. How oft do you tremble to see the foaming waves dance about you, and wash over you? Yet consider not how terrible it will be to have all the waves and billows of God's wrath go over your souls, and that for ever. How glad are you after you have been long tossed upon the ocean, to descry land? and how joyfully and eagerly do you look out for it? Who yet never had your hearts warmed with the consideration of that joy which shall be among the *saints*, when they arrive at the *heavenly haven*, and set foot upon the shore of *glory*.

O Sirs! I beg of you, if you have regard to those precious immortal souls of yours, which are also embarked for *eternity*, whither all winds blow them, and will quickly be at

their port of heaven or hell, that you will sincerely mind those things, to steer your course to heaven, and improve all winds, (I mean opportunities and means) to waft you thither. Here you venture life and liberty, run through many difficulties and dangers, and all to compass a perishing treasure; yet how often do you return disappointed in your design? Or if not, yet it is but a fading short-lived inheritance, which like the flowing tide, for a little while, covers the shore, and then returns, and leaves it naked and dry again: and are not everlasting treasures worth venturing for? Lord make you wise for eternity!

If God should bless this address to the conversion of any among you, you will be the gainers, and my heart shall rejoice, even mine. How comfortably should we shake hands with you, when you go abroad, were we persuaded your souls were interested in Christ, and secured from perishing in the new covenant? What life would it put into our prayers for you, when you were abroad, to consider that Jesus Christ is interceding for you in heaven, whilst we are your remembrancers here on earth? How quiet would our hearts be, when you are abroad in storms, did we know you had a special interest in him whom winds and seas obey? To conclude, what joy would it be to your godly relations, to see you return new

creatures? Doubtless more than if you had come home laden with the riches of both Indies.

Come, Sirs! set the heavenly *Jerusalem* upon the point of your new compass; make all the sail you can for it; and the Lord give you a prosperous gale, and a safe arrival in that land of rest.

So prays,
Your most affectionate friend
in the gospel of Christ,
JOHN FLAVEL.

The late Rev. JOHN FLAVEL, was one of the most powerful preachers of his day, and author of several valuable books, particularly one entitled "NAVIGATION SPIRITUALIZED;" a work which no seaman ought to be without. He was some years minister of the gospel at Dartmouth, in Devonshire, and died somewhat suddenly, at Exeter, where he went to preach before an assembly of ministers, on the 26th day of June 1691, aged 64. His end was so peaceful, that he scarce uttered a groan: among the last words he spake were these, "*I know that it will be well with me.*"—The following anecdote of this excellent man, is too re-

markable to be passed over: "The persecution against the dissenters being renewed, after the indulgence granted by Charles the Second, Mr. Flavel was driven from his beloved people at Dartmouth. The night before he embarked to go by water to London, he had a singular dream: He thought he was on board the ship, and that a storm arose which exceedingly terrified the passengers; during their consternation, there sat writing at the table, a person of a venerable appearance, who had a child by him in a cradle, which was very froward; and he thought he saw the father take up a little whip, and give the child a lash, saying, "Child be quiet, I will discipline, but not hurt thee."—Upon this, Mr. Flavel awoke, and musing on the dream, concluded that he should meet with some trouble on his passage. The next day when they embarked, some of the passengers were assuring themselves of a pleasant voyage, but Mr. Flavel replied, "He was not of their mind, for though the wind and weather were then very fair, he expected much trouble in their passage." Accordingly when they were advanced within five leagues of Portland, they were overtaken by a dreadful tempest, insomuch that, between one and two in the morning, the master and seamen concluded, unless God changed the wind, there was no hope of life, and it would be impossible to weather

Portland. Upon this Mr. Flavel called all the hands that could be spared into the cabin to prayer; but the violence of the tempest was such, that they could not prevent themselves from being thrown from one side of the ship to the other, as the ship was tossed; and not only so, but mighty seas broke in upon them, as if they would be drowned in the cabin. Mr. Flavel in this danger took hold of the two pillars of the cabin bed, and calling upon God, begged mercy for himself and the rest in the ship. Amongst other arguments which he used in prayer was this, that if he and his company perished, the enemies of religion would say, that though he escaped their hands on shore, yet divine vengeance had overtaken him at sea. In the midst of prayer, his faith and hope were raised, insomuch that he expected a gracious answer; so committing himself and friends to the mercy of God, he concluded. No sooner was prayer ended, but one came down from the deck, crying, "Deliverance! Deliverance! God is a God hearing prayer! In a moment is the wind become fair west!" and so sailing before it, they all arrived safe in London.*

* See Middleton's Biographia Evangelica vol. iv. p. 53.

The MARINER's HYMN.

JESU, at thy command
 I launch into the deep;
 And leave my native land
 Where sin lulls all asleep.
 For thee I fain would all resign,
 And sail to heav'n with thee and thine.

What though the seas are broad,
 What though the waves are strong,
 What though tempestuous winds
 Distress me all along;
 Yet what are seas or stormy wind
 Compared to Christ, the sinner's friend.

Christ is my pilot wise,
 My compass in his word;
 My soul each storm defies,
 While I have such a Lord,
 I trust his faithfulness and pow'r
 To save me in the trying hour.

Though rocks and quicksands deep
 Through all my passage lie;
 Yet Christ shall safely keep
 And guide me with his eye.
 How can I sink with such a prop
 That bears the world and all things up

By faith I see the land,
 The hav'n of endless rest;
 My soul, thy wings expand,
 And fly to Jesu's breast!
 O may I reach the heav'nly shore,
 Where winds and seas distress no more!

Whene'er becalm'd I lie,
 And all my storms subside;
 Then to my succour fly,
 And keep me near thy side.
 Far more the treach'rous calm I dread
 Than tempests bursting o'er my head.

Come heav'nly wind and blow
 A prosperous gale of grace,
 To waft from all below
 To heav'n my destin'd place.
 Then in full sail my port I'll find,
 And leave the world and sin behind.

FINIS.

4 NO 69

